

DONALD M. PAYNE
10TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE

COMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE
RELATIONS

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA
RANKING MEMBER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

DEMOCRATIC STEERING COMMITTEE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3010
September 15, 2003

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Mr. Richard E. Larson
Executive Director
CARES Commission
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Larsen,

As the (CARES) Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) Commission convenes its VISN3 field hearing today at the VA Lyons Campus, I would like to take this opportunity to express my views on health services for veterans.

While all of us support the goal of improving efficiency in the veterans health care system, I think it is important that the Commission preserve the rights of veterans to quality, accessible medical services. As the Administration prepares to spend \$87 billion to rebuild Iraq, we can certainly find room in the budget to provide medical care to those who rendered military service to protect our nation. I will strongly oppose any move to close New Jersey VA facilities or to reduce services to our State's 698,000 veterans. I hope that steps will be taken to eliminate the long waiting periods which veterans have been experiencing. Veterans in my area who are served by the VA centers at Lyons and East Orange have expressed concerns to me that they may be forced to travel to New York for tertiary care. I strongly urge the Commission to reject any such proposal.

As the CARES Commission continues its work, I trust that you will strive to improve delivery of medical services to the 698,000 men and women in New Jersey who have proudly served our nation in the military.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald M. Payne".

Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress